



THE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS

AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711

**CRAWFORD C. MARTIN
ATTORNEY GENERAL**

April 5, 1972

Hon. Jim Wallace, Chairman
Interim Committee to Study
The System of Licensing and
Examining Boards
Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

Opinion No. M-1116

Re: Necessity for licensing
of a voluntary non-
profit community group
to conduct crime-
watch activities.

Dear Mr. Wallace:

This is in response to your inquiry concerning the applicability of the Private Investigators and Private Security Agencies Act (Article 4413 (29bb), Vernon's Civil Statutes) to the activities of an organization known as the "Greater Houston Civic Council" (hereinafter referred to as "Council"), as well as its subsidiary groups known as "Neighborhood Security Patrols" (hereinafter referred to as "Patrol").

The pamphlet which you have furnished (a publication purporting to be a general outline of methods for organizing and operating a neighborhood security patrol) indicates that the Council is a voluntary non-profit association of citizens interested in better law enforcement in the city of Houston and that the Patrols are subsidiary voluntary non-profit associations of citizens formed to carry out a specific program of the Council. As set forth in the pamphlet, members of a Patrol will go about the public areas (streets, etc.) of their particular community to carry out organized surveillance and to report suspicious or unusual activities to proper authorities (i.e., police, sheriff, etc.).

This office will not comment upon the legality of the various suggested activities proposed for the Patrols other than to say that we know of no law or body of law that would prevent such a group from doing on an organized basis just so much as, and no more than, an individual might legally do under similar circumstances.

It is therefore our opinion that a non-profit voluntary association of citizens may maintain observance from public streets of activities in their own community but limited in the same manner and to the same extent as an individual citizen without first obtaining a license under the Private Investigators and Private Security Agencies Act.

S U M M A R Y

A non-profit voluntary association of citizens may maintain observance from public streets of activities in their own community but limited in the same manner and to the same extent as an individual citizen without first obtaining a license under the Private Investigators and Private Security Agencies Act.

Yours very truly,



CRAWFORD C. MARTIN
Attorney General of Texas

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APPROVED:
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